

Message Text

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71

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 BIB-01 EB-07 COME-00 OES-03

INT-05 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /104 W
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P 231705Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7783

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL TANGIER

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 1011

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, SS, AG, UR

SUBJECT: PRIMIN OSMAN MAKES SURPRISE STOPOVER IN MOSCOW

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1. SUMMARY: REPORTING ON OSMAN MOSCOW STOPOVER UPBEAT TO DATE, WITH CORDIALITY AND STRENGTHENING OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS HIGHLIGHTED. SAHARA, MIDDLE EAST, AND ANGOLA REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED. SOVIETS PRIOR TO VISIT HAD BEEN SPREADING LINE HERE THAT THEY WISH STAY OUT OF SAHARA SQUABBLE. ON ECONOMIC SIDE, LIKELY FOR DISCUSSION IN MOSCOW WERE MESKALA PHOSPHATE PROJECT AND RECENT SOVIET AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIANS TO EXPLOIT IRON DEPOSITS IN SENSITIVE TINDOUF REGION. PENDING CLARIFICATION SUBSTANCE DISCUSSIONS, POSITIVE SOUNDINGS ATMOSPHERICS APPEAR TO INDICATE GOM'S HAND HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED IN ITS DISPUTE WITH ALGERIA. END SUMMARY.

2. RETURNING FROM OFFICIAL VISIT TO JAPAN, PRIMIN OSMAN MADE SURPRISE STOPOVER IN MOSCOW FEB. 20 ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY MAP, OVERNIGHT STOP WAS AT INVITATION OF USSR. OSMAN REPORTED TO HAVE HAD 2 1/2 HOUR DISCUSSION WITH KOSYGIN SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. KOSYGIN OFFERED DINNER IN OSMAN'S HONOR SAME EVENING AND, ACCORDING TO MOROCCAN PRESS ACCOUNTS, TOASTS RENDERED AT THAT DINNER STRESSED THEMES OF "FRIENDLY RELATIONS LINKING THE TWO COUNTRIES" AND "DESIRE" OF TWO PARTIES TO REINFORCE THOSE LINKS. KOSYGIN ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED THE "RESPECT AND HIGH ESTEEM" IN WHICH SOVIET LEADERS HELD KING AND TO HAVE SENT HIM THEIR SALUTATIONS. KOSYGIN RENEWED INVITATION TO OSMAN FOR SUBSEQUENT (OFT-POSTPONED) OFFICIAL VISIT TO USSR. OSMAN IN HIS RESPONSE CITED USEFULNESS OF PREVIOUS OFFICIAL VISITS TO MOROCCO BY SOVIET LEADERS, ESPECIALLY KOSYGIN'S AUGUST 1971 VISIT, AND THE "SATISFACTORY RESULTS" OF THE DISCUSSIONS HELD AT THAT TIME.

3. OSMAN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SECSTATE FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE, MOHAMED BELKHAYAT, AND KAMAL LAKHDAR, ALSO OF PRIMIN'S OFFICE. BOTH OFFICIALS HAD ACCOMPANIED OSMAN ON TOKYO VISIT. IN ADDITION MFA SECSTATE AHMED CHERKAOUI FLEW TO MOSCOW TO MEET PRIMIN AND JOIN DISCUSSIONS.

4. VISIT HAS NATURALLY RECEIVED FRONT PAGE TREATMENT IN BOTH SEMI-OFFICIAL AND OFFICIAL PRESS HERE. FEB. 22 SEMI-OFFICIAL LE MATIN HEADLINED THAT SAHARA, MIDDLE EAST, AND ANGOLA WERE AT CENTER OF "POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS. PRESS REPORTS SHED LITTLE LIGHT ON OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED BUT "ARAB SOURCES" IN MOSCOW WERE QUOTED PRIOR TO PRIMIN'S ARRIVAL AS CONFIDENTIAL

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SAYING AMONG SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED WERE SAHARA AND SOVIET ROLE IN EXPLOITATION MESKALA PHOSPHATE PROJECT.

5. SOVIETS HAVE GONE TO GREAT PAINS OF LATE TO ASSURE MOROCCANS THEY NOT INTERESTED IN SEEING MOROCCO AND ALGERIA GO TO WAR OVER SAHARA. SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF

FEB. 13 THAT "HIGHEST LEVELS" OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD CONVEYED

THIS POINT TO GOM. SOVIETS CLAIMED THEY EXERCISING RESTRAINT ON ALGERIANS. OFFICIAL REMARKED THAT AT SAME TIME THEIR WOULD-BE OBJECTIVITY HINDERED BY THEIR DESIRE TO "SAVE" BOUMEDIENE.

6. MOROCCAN COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEF, ALI YATA, IN FEB. 20 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, SAID THAT KOSYGIN HAD PERSONALLY TOLD HIM THAT MOSCOW ABSOLUTELY WANTED STAY OUT OF MOROCCAN/ALGERIAN DISPUTE. ALI YATA SAID OSMAN WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HEAR THE SAME THING DURING HIS MOSCOW STOPOVER. RELATIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND MOROCCO WERE "GETTING MORE NORMAL," AND THIS FACT HELPED GOM WITH ALGERIANS. UNFORTUNATELY, ALI YATA LAMENTED, ALGERIA HAD SO ISOLATED ITSELF INTERNATIONALLY THAT VIRTUALLY NO THIRD COUNTRIES HAD ANY SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE WITH GOA. US MILITARY HELP TO MOROCCO, THIS MILITANT COMMUNIST STATED, THUS ASSUMED GREAT IMPORTANCE IN HELPING TO DISCOURAGE ALGERIANS FROM ADVENTURISM. (ALI YATA HAS LONG SOUGHT TO PORTRAY SOVIET ROLE HERE IN BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT. BASIS OF HIS PARTY'S LEGALITY IS ITS NATIONALIST LINE. AT SAME TIME, HE HAS GOOD ACCESS TO COMMUNIST LEADERS ABROAD AND HAS BEEN A USEFUL SOURCE IN TERMS HIS INSIGHT ON POLICIES SOCIALIST COUNTRIES TOWARDS MOROCCO.)

7. BACKGROUND AND COMMENT:

AGREEMENT ON MESKALA PROJECT, SIGNED DECEMBER 1974, WOULD INVOLVE SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN A LARGE PHOSPHATE PROCESSING ENTERPRISE AT MESKALA. GOM, IN MIDST OF ITS NOVEMBER 1975 PIQUE OVER WHAT IT PERCEIVED TO BE LACK OF SOVIET EVENHANDEDNESS ON SAHARA, REPORTEDLY INFORMED SOVIETS THAT PLANS FOR PROJECT WERE SUSPENDED FOR MOMENT. OF LATE EMBASSY HAS HAD REPORTS THAT GOM HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH SPANISH (RABAT 0972) AND FRENCH REGARDING POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF SOVIETS IN THIS PROJECT. WHETHER GOM HAS TAKEN IRREVOCABLE STEPS IN THE DIRECTION OF TERMINATING ITS ACCORD WITH USSR REMAINS TO BE SEEN IN WAKE OF OSMAN MOSCOW

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VISIT. IN RELATED ISSUE, SOVIETS RECENTLY SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIANS FOR JOINT EXPLOITATION IRON DEPOSITS IN SENSITIVE TINDOUF AREA (ALGIERS 0271). THESE DEPOSITS WERE TO HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED JOINTLY BY ALGERIANS AND MOROCCANS UNDER TERMS OF 1972 BORDER AND RELATED AGREEMENTS, WHICH MOROCCO HAS FAILED TO RATIFY. OSMAN UNDOUBTEDLY ATTEMPTED TO SEEK MOSCOW'S CLARIFICATION OF ITS INTENTIONS IN SIGNING THAT AGREEMENT WITH ALGIERS.

8. IN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT, GOM EVIDENTLY SOUGHT TO BALANCE OFF OSMAN

MOSCOW VISIT WITH FEB. 20 SIGNING OF ACCORD WITH PRC FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LARGE RABAT SPORTS COMPLEX.

9. WHAT OSMAN STOPOVER MEANS IN TERMS OF PRACTICAL IMPACT ON SAHARA EQUATION IS AT PRESENT UNCLEAR. IN TERMS OF ATMOSPHERICS,

HOWEVER, POSITIVE SOUNDING MEDIA OUTPUT AND HIGH LEVEL ATTENTIONS
GIVEN OSMAN DURING VISIT WOULD APPEAR TO STRENGTHEN MOROCCAN
POSITION VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA. WHETHER SOVIETS IN FACT ALSO ATTEMPTING
PLAY SOME HELPFUL MODERATING ROLE UNCLEAR.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976RABAT01011
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760067-0811
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760223/aaaaattj.tel
Line Count: 174
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIMIN OSMAN MAKES SURPRISE STOPOVER IN MOSCOW CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PFOR, MO, SS, AG, UR, (OSMAN, AHMED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006